

Built Environment

Land Use

Residential Uses

Residential development is now, and will continue to be, the predominant use of developed land within the plan area. Densities in the plan area (see residential area densities map) vary, generally, from very low in the southern half of the South Valley and in steep erodible slope areas, to high densities within the boundaries of the urban center along Central Avenue behind existing commercial uses. Higher densities adjacent to arterial roads north of Rio Bravo Blvd. may be appropriate if these densities are compatible with surrounding existing land uses, if City water and sewer services are provided, and air quality is not adversely impacted.

Residential Area 1

Minimal residential development is allowed within the light industrial corridor east of the river. Industrial development is appropriate since several modes of transporting industrial products exist in this area (i.e. rail, interstate, airport), and some already existing industry. Additional residential development would be appropriate west of the Barr Canal and east of the river if adequate buffering were required to separate the light industrial corridor east of the Barr Canal, and if densities for individual liquid waste disposal systems are upheld until a solution to the groundwater contamination is found and implemented. Ground water in this area contains some contamination, and it is important to minimize further degradation from uncontrolled industrial discharges and from additional individual liquid waste disposal systems on small lots.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Residential Area 2

This area contains the southern half of the South Valley, generally south of the Adobe Acres Subdivision west of the river and south of the Second Street treatment plant and east of the river and has a depth to ground water of less than ten feet. Residential Area 2 also includes the area just below Southwest Mesa escarpment (Zone 3) and a portion of the Southwest Mesa slopes (Zone 4), containing highly porous and erodible Bluepoint-Kokan soils.

For these reasons, a maximum density of one dwelling unit per net acre is recommended even in areas that have centralized community systems or municipal sewer services. Residential densities are based on evaluated considering site-specific conditions such as soil type, erodibility or agricultural capacity.

Residential Area 3

Residential densities up to a maximum of three dwelling units per net acre are allowed in Area 3, reflecting availability of municipal sewer systems with equivalent performance. The soil type supports a more intense residential use than in Residential Area 2, if development uses centralized community sewage systems, or municipal sewer systems. If individual "soil dependent" or "septic and leach field" liquid waste disposal systems are proposed, large lot sizes (one dwelling unit per net acre) should be required.

Residential Area 4

This area is located west of the Gun Club Lateral, south of the extension of Rio Bravo Boulevard (Dennis Chavez) westward, north of Pajarito Road and east of 118th street. This area allows densities of up to six dwelling units per net acre except in the portion of Area 4, that lies between the Gun Club Lateral and the 5050 feet elevation line. In this segment, densities should not exceed one dwelling unit per net acre due to existing nitrate contamination in ground water unless centralized, maintained community systems or municipal sewer is provided.

Residential Area 5

Residential Area 5 is located south of Central Avenue, east of 118th Street, west of the Rio Grande between Central and Bridge, west of the Arenal Main Canal, and north of the extension of Rio Bravo Blvd, now called Dennis Chavez Boulevard. This area contains the highest proposed densities for the plan area. Up to nine dwelling units per net acre could be allowed without significant adverse impact on the environment or existing neighborhoods. However, the portion west of Coors Boulevard lies within the identified soil deposition area for sediment from up slope. Individual wells and liquid waste disposal systems should not be allowed between the 5050 feet elevation line and Coors Boulevard due to their potential to further increase the existing high nitrate concentrations.

The residential densities identified on the following page are used as a basis to design sewer lines, water treatment and other public infrastructure for the Plan area. This is important because the availability of existing sewer lines serving adjacent areas should not precipitate an increase in density beyond those identified on the map.

Land Use and Development Patterns

The Bernalillo County Subdivision Ordinance regulates the subdivision of land. The regulations in these ordinances are applied uniformly in the County. However, all new subdivisions require conformance with the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Comprehensive Plan as well as all additional relevant area, master, sector, neighborhood, corridor, facility plans, and overlay zones.

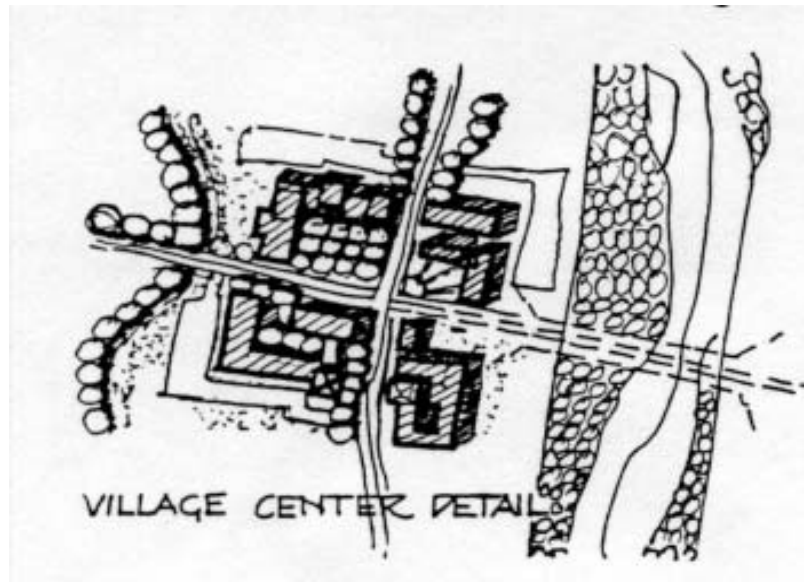
The Subdivision Ordinance requires compliance with these applicable plans. It also assures that development patterns reflect the long history of cultural values and the variety of land uses in the South Valley. These different types of subdivision patterns that exist in the South Valley and adjacent areas are shown below.



South Valley Subdivision Patterns

The long narrow lots (lineas) are the earliest land subdivision patterns to evolve in the valley. This pattern was formed as a way to divide lots among family members in order to allow access to irrigation ditches for various agricultural uses. This pattern is most evident in the southern portion of the plan area.

Over time, these long narrow lots have become subdivided crosswise which may limit the potential for irrigation and use of the ditch system. This type of development can promote the loss of more traditional development patterns as ditches are no longer used for irrigation and are vacated. Native vegetation, such as Cottonwood trees, are no longer able to survive and the general valley character could diminish. Typical suburban lots became a dominant pattern in many areas in the 1950's. Cluster development patterns are now occurring in many areas of the County due to their economy of infrastructure and the sense of community created by the grouping of homes. These can occur at a variety of scales from traditional family lineas to groups of clusters forming a village center.



Commercial and Office Uses

Several of the existing roadways, such as Isleta Boulevard, Coors Boulevard, Bridge Boulevard and Central Avenue have small scale commercial and office uses with unlimited driveway access. These strip commercial land uses create traffic congestion and safety hazards, increase air pollution by slowing down vehicular traffic and sometimes lead to poor economic conditions when the amount of area zoned for commercial uses exceeds the demand.

Some strip commercial areas uses now found along portions of the major roadways will continue to provide services and products to area residents. However, when the opportunity occurs, driveways serving these individual shops should be combined where possible, especially along those roads meant to function as collectors. Combined commercial access with limited or combined access should be permitted in the Plan area north of Pajarito Road, west of Coors, and north of Rio Bravo east of Coors as market demand indicates.

Two roadways within the plan area, Bridge and Isleta Boulevards, need detailed studies of existing and future land uses and existing and future roadway functions in relation to economic development opportunities. Corridor plans should examine these issues in relation to the revitalization of the adjacent land uses and efficient function of the roads. Isleta Boulevard's historic importance as part of El Camino Real should be a primary consideration in the corridor plan for this historic road.

Neighborhood scale commercial and office uses south of Pajarito Road are most appropriately located within the proposed historic Pajarito and Los Padillas village centers. Neighborhood scale commercial and office is defined as service-oriented businesses to meet the day-to-day needs of residents in the immediate area. Specific uses permitted are those included in the County's C-N zone.

The highest intensity commercial and office uses would be contained in the urban center near Westgate Heights, east of Second Street and along Rio Bravo Blvd. Commercial areas along Rio Bravo would be east of Second Street and should be programmed of an appropriate scale to contain attractive mixed use office and commercial development to attract and provide employment opportunities and a wider range of shopping for area residents who seek a major center for shopping. The stores and offices could also provide much needed additional economic activity for the area and also help to diminish the potential for future river crossings by creating areas of primary employment on both sides of the river.

Industrial Uses

In the plan area, a partially developed industrial corridor presently exists east of Second Street. A number of industrial and manufacturing uses, including a brick manufacturing plant, a dairy, lumber yard, poultry egg producer, oil company distribution center and a meat packing plant, are scattered throughout the area. The area east of the Barr Canal (north of Prosperity Road), and east of Second Street (south of Prosperity Road) within the plan area should be developed as a light industrial corridor which contains clean industry as well as office and commercial uses.

Industry in this area developed many decades ago when the railroad located next to Second Street was the prime mover of people and goods. Though many people were aware that legislation was needed to help preserve the environment, few regulations existed at that time. It wasn't until the 1960's that people became active to ensure that clean air and water were preserved. Regulations and ordinances to protect the environment and to maintain human health were a result of these efforts.

Although the problems have existed for decades, the full extent of the contamination of the shallow aquifer in the South Valley is now better understood. Decades of indiscriminate use of farm fertilizers, dumping of hazardous wastes and the widespread use of poorly designed or inadequately monitored septic tanks and leaking sewer lines in porous soils have seriously affected the groundwater. Further, for many decades, the criteria for quality of discharge was not designed to protect water quality for down stream water users.

It is believed that certain industrial uses are still a viable land use for this area today. Good access to the railroad, interstate highway and airport, as well as the proximity to Mesa del Sol of the existing the present industrial uses support additional industrial use in the area. However, continuing concern for the quality of ground water and the presence of the shallow water table, which is less than five feet below the surface in the flood plain portion of the Valley (and up to 35 feet in the south east mesa slop area west of I-25), have prompted the recommendation that additional land uses within the corridor be restricted to appropriate industrial uses. Proposed uses that have the potential to produce liquid industrial wastes should not be permitted. Industry, which legally existed before adoption of the Southwest area Plan, will be allowed to remain as long as they conform to present and future environmental regulations required by law.

Additional appropriate industrial uses in the existing industrial corridor will provide an economic boost to the area and create additional employment opportunities for residents of the South Valley as well as the entire metropolitan area.

Limited industrial uses are also permitted where appropriate elsewhere within the plan area such as the area west of the river below the escarpment and a small area along south Coors which contains limited industrial zoning. These areas shall be subject to landscape and design criteria cited in the policy section in this plan. Care must be taken to protect the ground water in those areas which contain porous soils and/or a shallow water table.

Village Centers

The South Valley and adjacent mesa areas are rich in historic and cultural resources. The first known settlements in the valley began thousands of years ago when nomadic tribes entered the area. For over a thousand years, this area was inhabited by Pueblo settlements, remnants of these patterns are scattered throughout the area. In 1598, Juan de Onate traveled north along the Rio Grande with a large group of settlers. The route he traveled later came to be called El Camino Real, "the royal highway." Isleta Boulevard now exists along part of the 1,600 mile route of this historic trail. The Pueblo Revolt in 1680 caused the abandonment of these settlements established in New Mexico along the royal highway.

In the late 1600's and early 1700's many of these early settlements were reestablished. The early plazas and ranchos of Atrisco (1692), Pajarito (1699) and Los Padillas (1703) were the sites of land grants from the King of Spain to encourage resettlement of the area after the Pueblo Revolt. Over the years, the arable land in the South Valley was divided among family members into long strips running perpendicular to the acequias. The mesa grazing lands, however, were held jointly and used for cattle and sheep ranching. The revitalization of the historic village centers in the South Valley will recognize and preserve some of this rich history and culture that residents of the area treasure and to which many of their ancestors contributed.

The South Valley historic village centers will serve as a visible expression of the historic and cultural traditions and a vital resource for the people who have lived in the valley over the many past decades. The centers will seek to reintegrate historic buildings and spaces of local interest into the surrounding neighborhoods. Consistent with other plans for the area, the concept of village and community centers are similar to historic village centers in the South Valley. These centers will provide for some housing of higher density, such as residences over stores, provide day-to-day services to surrounding neighborhoods, and will provide combined public and private services in centralized locations. New development proposed for the centers will be compatible in design, scale and character with the existing surroundings.

Over time, a particular historic center would include neighborhood-scale commercial and office uses, public services such as a branch library or local health services, residential uses similar in scale and style to those existing in the area, a village park or plaza with a written history of the area on display, pedestrian-oriented pathways, a bicycle/pedestrian link to each historic center, and restored historic buildings and settlement patterns.

The Five Historic Village Centers

Los Padillas

Los Padillas is the farthest south of the village centers. Its suggested Village center area would include Isleta Boulevard between Malpais Road to just north of Los Padillas Park, between the Los Padillas Drain and east of the Isleta Indian Lateral. The old Los Padillas Church stood less than one half-mile north of the Isleta Pueblo boundary, east of Isleta Boulevard near Marcelino Road. An old store building at 7600 Isleta Boulevard may be eligible for historic designation.



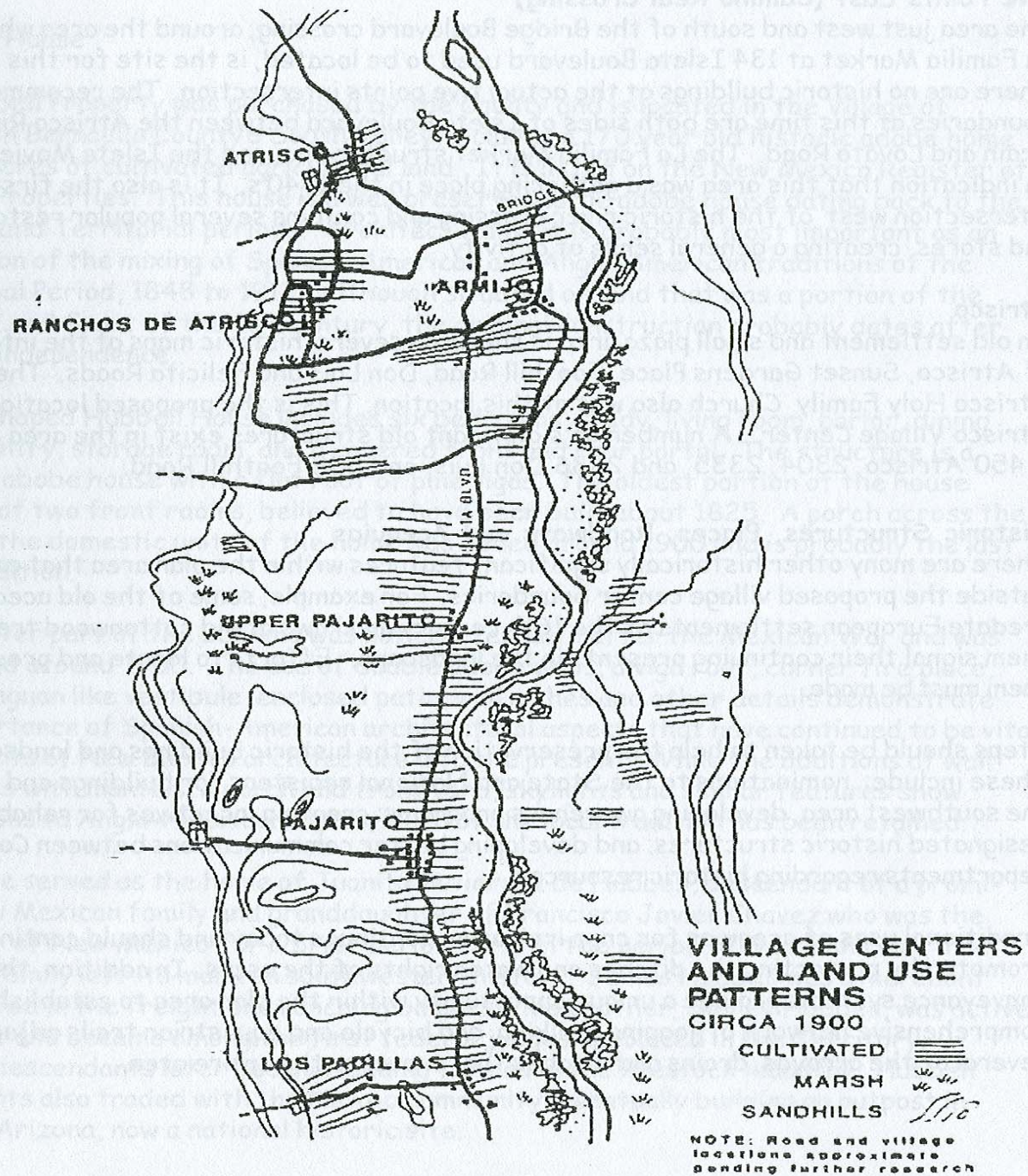
Pajarito

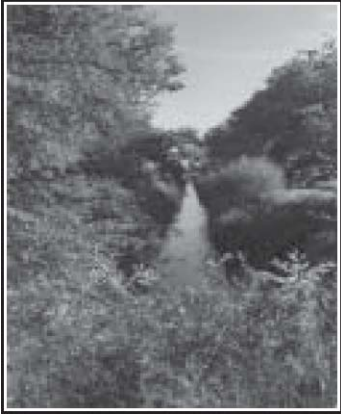
This village center was a linear settlement as can be seen in the alignment of many early twentieth century houses still standing along Isleta Boulevard. The original school site for this village was just northwest of the old church at Pajarito Road. However, the school moved farther north by the 1940's and has been a focal point for community activities of this part of Pajarito for fifty years. The boundaries proposed for this village center are Louise Road on the south and Torres Road on the north, extending roughly a block on either side of Isleta Boulevard. Designation of this larger center will encourage conservation of several historic properties along Isleta Boulevard and Appleton Way that are believed to be part of the turn-of-the-century village of Pajarito. The Hubbell House, built before 1825 and located at 6029 Isleta Boulevard, would also be within this center and be provided a protective buffer from incompatible development.

Armijo

The historic Armijo School is the focal point for this proposed village center. This structure is listed on the New Mexico State Historic Register. The old Armijo Post Office was located less than two blocks easterly at Lopez Road and Isleta Boulevard. The Crest View at 1212 Isleta Boulevard, stands just southeast of the former post office location. The motel was built in 1930 and is the oldest remaining motel of the "Highway 66" era. From 1927 to 1935, Isleta Boulevard from Bridge Boulevard to Route 6 in Los Lunas was designated as part of Route 66.

Recommended boundaries for the Armijo Village Center designation are the 900 block of Isleta Boulevard on the north and Montrose Place on the south. Pedestrian connections are being provided between the community center at Armijo School and St. Anne's Church on Arenal Road.





Five Points East (Camino Real Crossing)

The area just west and south of the Bridge Boulevard crossing, around the area where the La Familia Market at 134 Isleta Boulevard used to be located, is the site for this center. There are no historic buildings at the actual five points intersection. The recommended boundaries at this time are both sides of Isleta Boulevard between the Atrisco Riverside Drain and Lovato Road. The La Familia Market structure housed the Isleta Movie Theater, an indication that this area was a gathering place in the 1940's. It is also the first major intersection west of the historic river crossing and contains several popular restaurants and stores, creating a general sense of activity.

Atrisco

An old settlement and small plaza area is shown on several historic maps at the intersection of Atrisco, Sunset Gardens Place, Foothill Road, Don Luis and Felicita Roads. The old Atrisco Holy Family Church also was at this location. This is the proposed location for the Atrisco Village Center. A number of significant old structures exist in the area at 419-C & 450 Atrisco, 2304, 2335, and 2336 Don Luis, and 508 Foothill Road.

Historic Structures, Places, Roadways and Acequias

There are many other historically significant features within the plan area that exist outside the proposed village center boundaries. For example, some of the old acequias predate European settlements of the 16th century and rows of old cottonwood trees along them signal their continuing presents in the landscape. Efforts to locate and preserve them must be made.

Steps should be taken to help the preservation of the historic buildings and landscapes. These include: nominations to the State and National registers for buildings and places in the southwest area, developing awareness programs; creating incentives for rehabilitating designated historic structures; and developing better communications between County/City departments regarding historic resources.

Traditional uses of acequias for crop irrigation continues today and should continue to be promoted by protecting the ditches and water rights of the users. In addition, these conveyance systems provide a unique opportunity within the plan area to establish a comprehensive network of jogging/walking, and bicycle and equestrian trails adjacent to several of the arroyos, drains and ditches that traverse the entire area.

Hubble House

The Hubbell Property was purchased by the County and is located in the Village of Pajarito in Bernalillo County's South Valley, includes a 170 year old historic adobe home and ten acres of cultivated agricultural land. It is listed on the New Mexico Register of Cultural Properties. This house is a well-preserved large adobe house dating back to the Mexican and Territorial periods. Architecturally, it is probably most important as an illustration of the mixing of Spanish-American and Anglo-American traditions of the Territorial Period, 1848 to 1912. Although situated on land that was a portion of the Pajarito Land Grant of the 18th century, the original construction probably dates after Mexican independence.

The "L" shaped Hubbell House includes six bedrooms, study, living room, parlor, dining room, pantry, storage room, and a covered front and rear portal. The structure is a rambling adobe house with a flat roof of pine vigas. The oldest portion of the house consists of two front rooms, believed to have been built about 1825. A porch across the front of the domestic units of the home was added around 1900 and is probably the last major addition.

The greater part of the building was not erected until after the Mexican War and was completed around 1900. The use of double adobe walls, a viga roof, corner fire place, portal, zaguan like vestibule, enclosed patio, wall niches and other details demonstrate the importance of Spanish-American architectural aspects that have continued to be vital components of New Mexico architecture into the present. While the additions of wall fireplaces with mantels, a porch and front yard, skylights and similar features show adaptations to Anglo-American styles, much of the local tradition has been retained.

The house served as the home of Juanita Gutierrez de Hubbell, descendant of a prominent New Mexican family and granddaughter of Francisco Javier Chavez who was the Governor of New Mexico for a brief period early in the period of Mexican rule. The Hubbell family left its mark on southwestern history. James Hubbell was a merchant who thrived in the freight and ranching business; his brother, Sidney Hubbell, was active in politics and became among the first federal judges appointed in the Territory. Hubbell descendants later became leading figures in the livestock industry. Hubbell descendants also traded with the Navajo community, eventually building an outpost in Ganado, Arizona, now a national historic site.

Archaeological Sites

Human occupation in the Bernalillo County area began at least 12,000 years ago. There are approximately 800 known archaeological sites within Bernalillo County. There are many other sites as yet unidentified and many others already built over or altered by existing development. The new sites could help augment the four hundred year old written historic record of the area. Some of the sites could provide the basis for museum exhibits and other educational programs as well as a potential attraction for tourism. The South Valley, in particular, has undiscovered sites which could provide further historic detail of past Spanish, Mexican and Native American cultures and settlement patterns. The details discovered could provide more information to be translated into oral and visual histories in the proposed village centers. The potential for tourism greatly increases with the amount of information available at the centers.

Archaeological sites vary in importance, depending on the type and amount of information they contain. Even sites judged very significant may require preservation only until the valuable data can be extracted, thus freeing the land for development and other uses.

Integrating an archaeological survey and site evaluation with the development and planning processes can prevent unnecessary delays in development and losses of important information on past civilizations of Bernalillo County. Costs to developers caused by project delays when testing or excavation is necessary can be reduced if sites are identified prior to the initiation of development.

Transportation

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2020 (MTP) is developed by the Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments (MRGCOG) which is a voluntary organization of local governments that serves as the metropolitan planning organization for the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area. The Federal government requires that metropolitan areas over 200,000 develop a Metropolitan Transportation Plan for a 20-year period and update it every three years. The MTP 2020 is the Albuquerque area's response to that requirement.

The MRGCOG seeks input from the general public during their planning process. MRGCOG established a Public Involvement Committee in 1994, a standing committee which meets monthly and is made up of citizens from throughout the urban area. Members represent each City of Albuquerque Council District, Bernalillo County Commission District, the City of Rio Rancho, Sandoval County, and the Villages of Tijeras, Corrales and Los Ranchos de Albuquerque.

Roadways

The primary local carriers of metropolitan traffic, as opposed to regional and statewide vehicular traffic, are principal and minor arterials. Arterials form the spine for local traffic in an area. In developing the southwest arterial network, significant attention was paid to assuring that plan area residents and landowners were served by the existing and proposed roads. Some of the major roads will provide more local service to businesses and neighborhoods than will others. On the other hand, arterials with more access control and less local service will provide higher speed traffic movement with fewer disruptions for through-traffic. This reduces the opportunity for air pollution problems, particularly in the low-lying valley area.

A Metropolitan Transportation Plan is a tool for enabling the people in a metropolitan area to determine the direction of transportation facilities and policies. The MRGCOG has worked in cooperation with local governments to develop the MTP 2020. The 2020 analyzes what would happen if current trends were allowed to continue and offers a set of recommendations aimed at relieving congestion, maintaining air quality, and improving quality of life.

Land Use and Growth Patterns

Certain land use strategies such as mixed-use developments, higher densities in some areas and bicycle, pedestrian, and transit-friendly development can decrease congestion significantly by reducing the number of trips citizens need to make. However, federal law requires that only those land use strategies already adopted by local governments can be assumed in the 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Technical staff at Bernalillo County, the Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments and the City of Albuquerque are currently working on projects that could result in land use policies that are significantly different from those that are now in place. These efforts are listed in the table below and next page.

2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Roadway System Improvement Recommendations in the Southwest Plan Area							
Roadway	From	To	Project Description	2000	2005	2010	2020
Arenal	Isleta	Coors	Widen existing			2lns to 4 lns	
Coors	Pajarito	Central	widen existing				4lns to 6 lns
Isleta	Rio Bravo	Arenal	Widen existing	2lns to 4 lns			
Unser	Sage	Arenal	Widen existing				2lns to 4 lns
98 th	Sage	Rio Bravo	New location				2lns
Unser	Arenal	Rio Bravo	New location				4lns

Bike and Pedestrian Issues

The current plan for bicycle facility development in the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area is shown on the next page. This map shows bicycle facilities that are intended to be used predominately for transportation. The intent is to provide for the needs of bicycling commuters. This map does not show all the bicycling facilities to be constructed by 2020, but it does show major facilities such as Riverside Drain trails, the Interstate 40 bicycle trail, and many of the west side trails and projects.

A 1990 bicycling survey found that an average 2.9% of adults in the western United States commute to work by bicycle on a regular basis. In the majority of these communities, bicyclists are commuting either without an interconnected bicycle system or in a limited bicycle network. Approximately 20% of the survey respondents said they would sometimes commute to work by bike if safe bikeway on roads and highways were available. The Metropolitan Transportation Plan establishes a direction for the community in developing an interconnected bicycle system to increase bicycle commuting.

Anticipated Impact of Bicycle Improvements on Number of Vehicle Trips			
Type of Project	In 2010	In 2020	Rational
Identify/build missing bicycle/pedestrian links	33% increase in bike trips	200% increase in bike trips	As the facilities increase and the bicycling environment improves in terms of safety, availability of lockers and showers, etc. more people will choose the bicycling option.
Bike lockers/showers			
Street geometry designed for bicycle safety			
Increased facility construction/stripping			

Placeholders and Major Investment Studies

The Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments has termed certain projects as "Placeholders." Placeholders are projects that are anticipated to be developed in the next 20 years but for which detailed information is not yet available. Information attained will be developed as part of the environmental analysis and design work for the project. Because detailed information is not yet available, the 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan uses the best information currently available to analyze the potential impact it will have on congestion and air quality.

Major Projects Identified in the 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Anticipated for the Next 20 Years in the Southwest Plan area as of July 15, 1998			
Facility	Lead Agency	Description of Project	Projected Date for Completion of MIS
Coors, Pajarito to Central	City of Albuquerque	Six lane facility with potential provision for bicyclists. <i>Conformity analysis assumptions reflect these characteristics.</i>	MIS not yet begun

Major Projects not Anticipated to be Developed or Constructed in the Next 20 Years, Which are Listed in the 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan for information Purposes Only.			
Facility	Lead Agency	Description of Project	Projected Date for Completion of MIS
Southwest Transportation Corridor	Bernalillo County	Rio Bravo/Paseo del Volcan to the vicinity of I-25 and Coors. Construction of a limited access six-lane facility.	Not Anticipated to be Developed or Constructed in the Next 20 Years. Not included in the draft of the 2020 MTP